

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Oklahoma Sooners

Porter Moser

Tanner Groves

Grant Sherfield

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma Sooners, 49 - Oklahoma State, 57

THE MODERATOR: We've got Coach Moser here along with Grant Sherfield, and Tanner Groves.

Coach, can you get us started with some general comments about the game.

PORTER MOSER: Obviously disappointed with the results. My expectations were way higher. I'm not disappointed with the effort, not disappointed with how these guys approached it. I thought their effort was really good. Just disappointed in the result, unable to make some shots. Obviously, disappointed with the result.

Q. Tanner, coach mentioned or Porter mentioned the effort was there, but the shots just weren't falling today. How much was that maybe their defense or their length? And how much was it just shots weren't falling today?

TANNER GROVES: I think it was 100 percent shots just didn't fall to be honest. Coach gave us a great game plan, I thought we stuck to it really well. They only scored 57 points. That's pretty good defense. It really just comes down to shots. I mean, 14 of 56 as a team, it's not going to win you a game, but, I mean, I'm happy with our effort. I thought the effort was there. Regardless of makes and misses, I thought we were fighting to the end, and I'm proud of that, so I'd say that.

Q. Tanner, it's three times you guys have seen them, and three times they've really gone after you guys inside. What's made them -- we know the length and the size, but what's made them such a uniquely tough match-up for you guys in the paint?

TANNER GROVES: I just think length and athleticism, really. I thought we did a lot better this time. This time around we held most of their guys, most of their bigs. I know they got a lot of rebounds and whatnot, but I don't know. I don't really know.

Q. What did OSU do to make it difficult for you tonight? And were you happy with your looks and they just weren't falling? How did that play out for you?

GRANT SHERFIELD: I kind of know what I'm getting into now going into every game. They're a good defensive team. But at the end of the day, I didn't make shots. I mean, that's on me at the end of the day.

Q. Grant, just a follow on that, did you identify any differences in how they defended you tonight? Obviously Avery Anderson was there the previous two games, but were there differences or was it the same approach?

GRANT SHERFIELD: I mean, it was the same approach. We do a good job. Our coaches do a good job of giving us a scout and just we're following everything. So, I mean, I was prepared. I just felt like I didn't show up today. Disappointed in that.

Q. Tanner, two years, yeah, two years ago you come to OU, what were your expectations when you came? And now how do you look back on your career as it's coming to an end?

TANNER GROVES: My expectations were just to compete and have fun at an incredible university in the best conference in the nation. I'll forever be grateful for the experience. Coach has given me an opportunity to get to play here and showcase my talents.

Regardless of wins and losses, I think it's more about, you know, the relationships you form and the people you meet along the way. Man, like we were talking about it in the locker room, and even on the team bus the last couple days, regardless about how many wins and losses we've

had this year, you know, this has been one of the most fun teams I've been part of because of how together we are off the court. Always doing stuff together, and, you know, so I mean I think that's a big part of it, the relationships you form and the people you meet. That's been huge for me.

Q. For both of you, you both walked Senior Day knowing this could possibly be the last time you wore an Oklahoma jersey. What are you feeling right now?

TANNER GROVES: Yeah, I mean, it's obviously disappointing to go out this way. But I'm just honestly feeling grateful. That's really all that comes to mind. Just how grateful I am for the opportunity to get to play here, man. It's been an incredible experience, and, I mean, it's going to be like some of the -- like especially this year, we had some great wins. Just, you know, those are going to be memories that stick with me for the rest of the my life. So I'll forever be grateful for that.

GRANT SHERFIELD: Yeah, I mean, Tanner said it best. Yeah, I'm just grateful. This is the third program I've been to, so just being part of this program, I mean, it's brought the joy back to the game for me, for sure. I mean, just having teammates like Tanner and Jay to lean on, our young guys bringing fun back to the game for me. So I'm just grateful. I'm really happy to be part of this program. Yeah, I wouldn't change anything.

Q. Kind of a follow-up to that, the same question Barry asked Tanner, what were your expectations coming to OU, and how will you look back at this one season as a sooner?

GRANT SHERFIELD: I mean, my expectations were definitely to get to March Madness and win some games and advance. But it didn't happen. I can't hang on my head on it. I've got to say, I formed so many great relationships on this team. Before coming here, I didn't know how I felt about basketball. But this team brought the joy back -- the joy of the game back for me, and I'm grateful for that. I'm actually happy to be playing basketball, so I mean, I just wouldn't change that for anything.

Q. When you think of guys like Los and Otega, the young guys, what do you hope you can leave them with for them to take this program where you guys want it to be?

TANNER GROVES: Just how competitive you've got to be. I mean, they understand, like, especially after this year, they understand how every game is so crucial. We lost a lot of games this season that were just within one to two possessions. So, now I think that after this season

they'll understand like just how crucial those little wins are that, you know, you could easily flip the switch.

Like especially looking at our season, you could flip the switch on like four, five games and we'd be in the March Madness picture right now. So that's just huge, I mean, for those guys.

But just looking what they -- especially what they brought to the table this year, I mean, I'm so proud of those guys. I just think they compete their asses off, and it's been great playing with those guys.

Q. Similar to what I asked Tanner, you brought him in two years ago or he gave you two good years. What are you going to remember about his two years at Oklahoma?

PORTER MOSER: I'm going to remember just an unprecedented times, sight unseen. Hadn't met him. He never saw the campus, and he said he wanted to come to Oklahoma. That, and he's given everything he's had since the day he walked on our campus. So that's what I'm going to remember about Tanner Groves. You can just see he's got this positive outlook about things. And he gave everything he had in unprecedented times.

He said he wanted to come to Oklahoma and his team had three teammates on it at the time. He had never seen the campus, and he never met me or my staff.

So just an incredible faith and belief. He believed in what we were going to do. And I think we fulfilled a lot of things for him. Except you asked about expectations, my expectation was to get in the tournament. My expectations is to take this program and be at a high level, and we didn't do that, not yet. And we've got to be better.

But my expectations are to do it with guys like you just heard. You know, you just heard some high-character guys that are talking about the way the locker room is, the way they are around each other. That's my expectation to have a program where they're all pulling for each other.

But to go along with that, my expectation is to win, and there we fell short.

Q. Porter, you alluded to it earlier, that the effort was there, but the shots just weren't falling. Maybe what does that say about the team despite having one of the toughest offensive outputs of the season, that you guys were able to keep that close to the end?

PORTER MOSER: I thought they fought. I thought the last three days, from the moment we got paired up they

were -- I mean, there was no -- they knew how hard they prepared for this, how hard they played, defended. We just weren't good enough, you know, offensively. And I tend to think it's both.

You know, those two humbly put it on themselves and said they didn't make shots, and we didn't. We had a lot of good shots. But you also got to give them credit. They're an elite defensive team. Their length, their length, their speed to make up when you do have an open shot, there's speed to close that gap to win it, how long it's open. So they're humble. We did miss some good shots, but you've got to give credit where credit is due. They're an elite defensive team.

Q. Can you describe what it was like to play in this league this year?

PORTER MOSER: It was something that, you know, obviously the statements every night, there's no bottom to the league. Here we are Wednesday night, a play-in game, and you had one team beat the ACC champion by 30. You had another team beat the SEC champion by 20, and we're in the play-in game. It's -- it's something that the physicality, the talent level, the teams, there's just no -- there's just no bottom. There's no nights off. And it's unprecedented this year.

Q. At various times you and Tanner referred to all the close losses. You talked about it was just inches. Where do you think you need to be better going forward in the coming years to make up those inches and turn those into wins?

PORTER MOSER: Yeah, we'll address that this spring. We need to be better. I think we need to improve our shooting. We need to improve our length and athleticism in this league. We need to get old and stay old. I think we're the only team that started two freshmen. So those are two guys that logged in a lot of minutes. We've got to keep developing those guys and get better development.

But I think we've got to increase our length, athleticism, shooting to start with there. That will start this spring recruiting. I think we've got to continue to be better offensively.

The way I look at it, we're going to have a complete break down, what we can do better offensively, what we can do better defensively. I do that every year. But I know we're going to really address our length, athleticism, shooting, in the off-season.

Q. Porter, you talk about expectations and you've spoken a lot about your vision. Where, this year, if you

can think about it now just off the court, where did you take steps? Where did you see the steps taken toward that bigger vision during the season?

PORTER MOSER: I thought we expected to win every game. I don't think I -- as daunting as our schedule was, it was like, all right, we just played Texas, now we've got to play Kansas.

As daunting as the schedule was, I thought they believed they could win every game. I thought they believed we could win it, and we competed with some of the best teams in the country in some of the best venues in the country, Kansas, Texas. And we were right there, but we fell short. So I thought we took steps, and I really feel like behind the scenes, the prep, they believed.

We've got to get better. We've got to get better. It starts with me, starts with development, starts with recruiting in a lot of areas, but we've got to get better.

But I thought there were -- I was talking to two TV analysts about it saying we got five ranked wins or six, and we finished tied for last. And so there were moments, but we've got to be more consistent to get over those humps with some of the best teams in the country, and we will. And we will.

Q. Coach, I don't know what the rules are around the NIT. You were two games under 500. If the NIT came to you Sunday night and said we think you're one of the best 32 remaining teams in the country, would you take the invite and keep playing?

PORTER MOSER: I always like to compete. It's in my blood, and I want to compete. So, you know, I want -- I don't want to stop coaching Tanner Groves, if it's the opportunity. So my mind hasn't been there yet, so I've got to process that. But I know just the way I'm wired, I just love to compete.

Q. Coach, we've been talking so much about belief the last three weeks. How important is it, and how do you instill that belief in the guys coming back and in recruits through this off-season after a disappointing season?

PORTER MOSER: Well, there's a ton of -- there's a ton of unbelievable things to tell about the University of Oklahoma. We're at the University of Oklahoma. We've got to continue to recruit. I thought the two freshmen that we had, you know, there were two ESPN top 75 guys, they got thrown into the fire. You know, played a ton of minutes as freshmen and got better. We've got to develop those guys. We've got to develop and recruit, bring the guys in.



We've got to get better at the roster building. We've got to get better at all this development this summer. We've got to get stronger. We've got to get better at our atmospheres. We've got to get better at a lot of different things.

But to sell it, we're at the University of Oklahoma. We've got a lot of great things. I'm disappointed with the outcome, disappointed with the results. But I'm not one iota, you know, stumbling. My momentum of where we're going to go, to sell the belief of where we're going with that, I've never had a problem with that. I know my passion is where we're going. Disappointed, but not detracted.

Q. Grant had mentioned how he had lost his passion for the game before coming here?

PORTER MOSER: I'm sorry, what did you say?

Q. Grant had talked about how he had lost his passion for the game before coming here.

PORTER MOSER: Oh, lost his passion.

Q. What do you remember about how transparent he was about where his head was at during the recruiting process, and to hear him say this is where he found that passion again, what does that mean to you?

PORTER MOSER: Like I said about expectations, I expect to put together a program where the guys are pulling for each other. They love. It's a family atmosphere, but coinciding with winning, you know? That's what I've done before. But the fact that he's been impacted, I mean, in the world of all the stuff going on, you've still got to -- the main thing is the main thing. The main thing are the student-athletes.

And for him to say that, that's humbling that he was impacted. He found the love of basketball. So I know we're trending in the right direction of how we're building that, but we've also got to trend it into where my expectations are to win.

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